



# The President's Daily Brief

October 1, 1976

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~~Top Secret~~ 25X1



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

October 1, 1976

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USSR:

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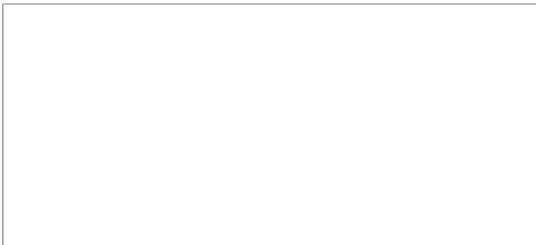
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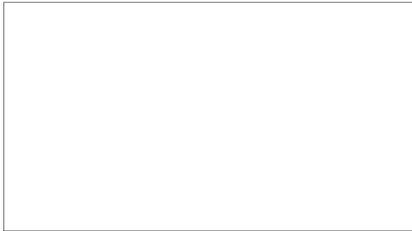
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LEBANON: *The main Syrian offensive in Mount Lebanon apparently paused yesterday, possibly to give the Palestinians a chance to meet Syrian terms.*

The Syrians will be in no mood to compromise



Casualties reportedly are low, indicating that the Palestinians made little effort to resist the Syrian advance.

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The Palestinians clearly are edgy.



Sources of the US embassy in Damascus have reported that several Syrian battalions, including armor and artillery, entered Lebanon earlier this week.

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*An Egyptian newspaper reported yesterday that the "mini summit" has been scheduled for Saturday in Jidda.*

Arab League mediator Hasan Sabri al-Khuli told moderate leftist leaders yesterday that five Arab states--presumably excluding Syria--have agreed to attend.

We believe that the Saturday date may be an Egyptian attempt to railroad Syria into cooperating. Syria would be reluctant to attend such a meeting at this juncture, but would probably be unable to hold out against a summit if the Saudis were determined to hold one.

*Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi arrived unexpectedly in Paris yesterday to consult President Giscard.*

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry told the US embassy in Cairo only that the visit involved Lebanon. The press in Cairo has speculated that Lebanese Christians are considering a request for the intervention of French troops as a peacekeeping force. Egypt undoubtedly would fear that the presence of French troops would further tip the military balance toward the Christians and Syrians.

On the other hand, the Egyptians probably would welcome and encourage a French diplomatic effort for which they would share some of the credit.

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JAPAN: Prime Minister Miki's chances for weathering the challenge to his leadership and remaining in office through this year's lower house elections have improved.

Since the Diet opened two weeks ago, Miki has clearly gained some breathing room as a result of the political truce with his opponents. Liberal Democratic Party leaders remain united on the need to pass a number of pending fiscal bills during the current session, and Miki has dealt carefully with sensitive issues.

Miki's rivals are increasingly pessimistic over the chances for renewing the challenge to the Prime Minister. That change in mood has resulted in large part from dissatisfaction with the approach of Deputy Prime Minister Fukuda, [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] the party leaders' desire to curtail political infighting in an election year and the need of candidates to start campaigning will diminish his opponents' ability to challenge him at the special party convention later this month.

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CHINA-USSR: [redacted]  
[redacted]

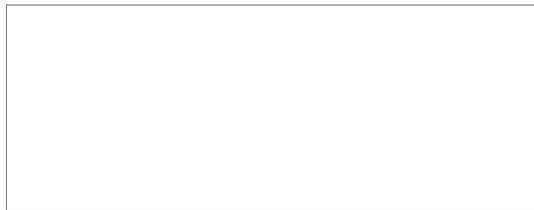
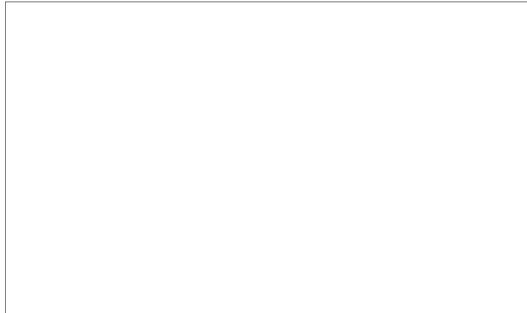
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The USSR [redacted] is still taking a conciliatory approach toward China.

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This morning, the Soviets seized on China's national day to send two additional signals to the Chinese leadership. The USSR's message of greetings emphasizes that the "normalization" of relations would serve those "interested in the building of socialism and communism."

In addition, an article today in Pravda stresses that the USSR is "prepared to normalize relations." The article also points out that there are "no problems" that cannot be solved given the "mutual desire to...take into account each other's interests."

These signals are in line with previous Soviet moves.

The USSR has tailored its media treatment of China to appeal to those Chinese leaders who may favor some normalization in state

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relations. During his speech to the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Gromyko also pointed to Moscow's readiness to "normalize" relations.

The USSR is building an effective case that it is striving to improve relations while China continues to be intractable. The frequency of Soviet gestures suggests that Brezhnev does not want to be open to the charge made against Khrushchev in the early 1960s of pursuing an unnecessarily militant policy toward China and of failing to try a more tactful approach.

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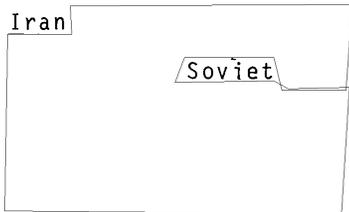
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NOTES

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Soviet party secretary  
*Andrey Kirilenko's 70th birthday last month was saluted with appropriate honors, including the publication of his collected speeches and articles.*

As Brezhnev's unofficial deputy, Kirilenko still seems the most likely interim successor in the event of the General Secretary's sudden death or incapacitation, and these almost obligatory honors serve to draw attention to his favorable position in the hierarchy.

In receiving his second "Hero of Socialist Labor" award and official praise for his speeches, Kirilenko has caught up with the other senior leaders--Brezhnev, President Podgorny, Premier Kosgyin, and party secretary Suslov. All except Brezhnev have already celebrated their 70th birthdays. Brezhnev, whose honors came early, will be 70 in December.

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The USSR may be planning to send a new crew to the Salyut 5 space station in mid-October.

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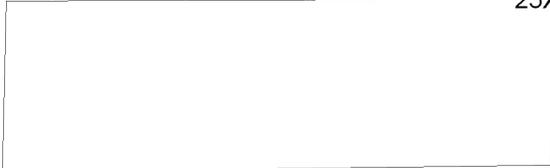
mission rehearsals will begin on October 10, with the launch date perhaps a week or so after.

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The Salyut 5 military space station has been in orbit since June 22. Two cosmonauts manned it for 48 days in July and August, [redacted] 25X1



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*The fourth convoy of Cuban ships returning from Angola arrived late yesterday at the military port of Mariel, just west of Havana.*

Photography of the ships, [redacted] does not provide any conclusive evidence as to the number of personnel aboard. Although few persons were visible on the ships' decks, many hatches were at least partially open and some draped with canvas awnings, indicating that some passengers were being carried in the holds. The attempt at concealment on the latest convoy suggests that Cuba has tightened security to deny us information about the contents of the convoys. 25X1

Ships in this convoy and the previous one were very similar in appearance. They were all riding high in the water, for example, and several carried on deck a type of anti-aircraft machinegun usually associated with ground forces. More deck cargo--military trucks and heavy construction equipment--was visible than in the third convoy.

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